in the Currency Declaration Form, in case the aggregate value of these exceeds US $ 10,000/- or its equivalent w.e.f. 6.11.91 as against the earlier ceiling of $ 1,000/-.

(c) Adequate powers already exist with the Government to curb economic crimes relating to foreign currency under the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act, 1973.

**Amendment of Patents Act, 1970**

296. DR. ASIM BALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to extend patent of life forms by amending the Patents Act, 1970; and

(b) if so, the Government's stand in regard to joining the 'Plant Breeders Right'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). Government has not taken any decision on patenting of life forms by amending the Indian Patents Act. However, the Department of Biotechnology has constituted a Committee which is currently examining issues related to the scope of patentability of biotechnological inventions. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is separately examining the issue of Plant Breeders' Rights and the question of Government's stand thereon.

**Bench of Bombay High Court at Kolhapur**

297. SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a persistent demand from the public belonging to six western districts of Maharashtra for the establishment of a Bench of the Bombay High Court at Kolhapur; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes, Sir. Representations have been received from time to time for establishing Benches of Bombay High Court at Amravati, Pune, Kolhapur and Sholapur in addition to the principal seat of the High Court at Bombay and its existing permanent Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad.

(b) No decision can be taken by the Central Government unless a proposal with the recommendation of the High Court is received from the State Government in this regard. We await such proposal containing the High Court's recommendation to proceed further.

**Income Tax on Interest on Bank Deposits**

298. SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD
SHRI P.C. THOMAS
SHRI BALRAJ PASSI
SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE
SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been sharp decline in the bank deposits as a result of the Government's decision to deduct tax at source on interest income from bank deposits;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the comparative figures of the bank